

Notes on some British Chrysomelidae (Col.)
including Amendments and Additions to the List

By A. A. ALLEN, B.Sc., A.R.C.S.¹

(Concluded from page 225)

8. *Aphthona venustula* Kutsch.—We have up to now known by this name a blackish-blue *Aphthona* locally common on wood-spurge in England and Ireland. Some time ago, however, my late friend D. K. Kevan noticed that in regard to femoral colouration it did not tally with the descriptions of *venustula*; and Dr. V. Hansen confirmed from a sample sent to him that our insect was not the Continental one of that name. It was Dr. A. Strand who suggested that it might turn out to be *A. melancholica* Weise, and subsequent investigation has proved him right. The case is simply one of mistaken identity, so that in future *melancholica* Weise (= *venustula* auct. Brit. nec Kutsch.) must replace Kutschera's species in our list. The latter seems rather unlikely to occur in Britain. Fowler's description (1890: 270) is of the true *venustula*, as shown by the last few words.

The two species are readily distinguished, *melancholica* having the front and middle femora wholly clear rufo-testaceous, concolorous with the tibiae, while in *venustula* they are blackened in the basal half. In other respects the species are much alike outwardly. The aedeagus, however, is unlike in the two: in *melancholica* the apex is subspatulate, ending in a small slightly prominent blunt point, and straight in side view; in *venustula* it is parallel-sided, the tip rounded with no acumen, and curved in side view; the various impressions and sculptural features also differ. (Cf. Heikertinger, 1944.)

A. melancholica was only known from the Iberian Peninsula when Heikertinger wrote (*l.c.*): Northern Spain (Asturia, etc.), and middle and north Portugal. That it should be a not uncommon species in the British Isles (with the apparent exception of Scotland) is thus very interesting and remarkable. I know of no strictly parallel case; the typical "Lusitanian" distribution-pattern differs considerably, including as it does western France (if only the seaboard), and in Britain usually only the west (often Ireland alone). *A. melancholica* must almost certainly be present, even if not yet found, in the first of these regions. Possibly it has been passing in France, as in Britain, as *A. venustula*.

9. *Chaetocnema aridula* Gyll.—This species formerly stood in our list (cf. Fowler, 1890: 386), but was later withdrawn (1913: 170-1) as having been introduced in mistake for *C. arida* Foud. It is, however, much closer to *C. confusa* Boh., and being one of the commonest and most widespread of the genus in Europe—equally with *C. hortensis* Geof., which abounds with us—its apparent absence here is curious. Donisthorpe, it is true (1939: 124) claimed to have taken it "in fair numbers" by sweeping grass-tussocks in Windsor Forest; but this record

¹ 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London, SE7 8QG.

is in error, the specimens (one of which I have) being only *confusa*.

Nevertheless, it seems that the species may be British after all, for there is a single ♀ in the Power collection at the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), labelled "Power/Burnham Beeches" and "*aridula* Gyll.?" It is a distinctive-looking specimen in both shape and colour, rather large and long for a *Chaetocnema*, the sides relatively little rounded, the fore-body broad, the thorax little narrowed in front and nearly as wide as elytra; quite black (probably abnormal in that respect) with only the elytra rather shining. The eyes appear larger than in *confusa*, though this is not a recognised character. The really significant point is the dullness of the pronotum caused by strong microsculpture; in *confusa* this part is very shiny. The 1st antennal segment and more or less of the other basal ones are blackish—also a feature in which the species is said to differ from *confusa*. (In my experience, the criterion of a darker or lighter base to the antennae, often stressed as important, seems very unstable in most of the species but is perhaps less so in this instance.) The more oblong form should help in separating *aridula*⁴ from *confusa*, but the colour-difference usually given—blackish-green in the former, brassy-bronze in the latter—scarcely holds good, since our *confusa* presents either tint. Finally, the aedeagus is a little different in the two species (Mohr, p. 257, figs. 11, 12).

The insect in question agrees so well in all essentials with Mohr's diagnosis (p. 258) of *aridula*—while fitting no other—that I feel no doubt of its being that species. Although further captures are much to be desired, the above specimen from Buckinghamshire is perhaps sufficient to secure for *C. aridula* a place on the British list.

10. *Psylliodes instabilis* Foud.—Introduced as British on the strength of an old specimen (locality unknown?), previously placed as *picipes* Redt. but later named as above by Kutschera. Fowler (p. 392) mentions a few other specimens referred to *instabilis* from the Crotch collection without locality (later passing to E. Saunders); one taken by Rye at Mickleham, Surrey; and one in the Power collection without data. He quotes Rye, however, as being of the opinion that these insects—or at least his (Rye's) and that named by Kutschera—are only a variety of *P. cuprea* Koch, a fairly common species with us; adding that, though his single example (from Saunders) seems distinct, *cuprea*, as Rye observed, is certainly variable [in colour at all events]. To this day nothing further appears to have been published on the matter, nor the plainly unsatisfactory British status of *P. instabilis* questioned. Joy (1932) omits the species, but it is included in the 1945 Check List.

There are in the Power collection two exponents of this *Psylliodes*: a ♂ labelled as taken by F. Plant at Piper Wood, Leics., in 1859, and further labelled (possibly by Allard)

⁴ Hansen (1927) gives an excellent illustration of the present species, which shows well the rather characteristic shape.

"*picipes* (Redt.) Foudr."; and a ♀ from Mickleham (Rye) with labels "*instabilis* Fd." and "Kutsch.". Another stands over the label *instabilis* in the Champion collection, labelled "Ex coll. Rye" and with "Rye/*picipes*" pencilled below the card in Champion's hand. Having subjected all three to a critical scrutiny, I find myself in total accord with Rye's view cited above, and conclude that our so-called *instabilis* is based on nothing more than small, rather narrow and flattish, obscurely bluish forms of *cuprea*. What appears certain is that they are in any event not the true *instabilis* (as characterised by Reitter, Mohr *et al.*), still less the true *picipes*; these are shorter, more convex, differently punctured species with partly dark legs, etc., and unlikely to occur in Britain. Under the former name Fowler (p. 391) gives a description probably taken from his own putative specimen (v. *supra*), as it certainly does not represent Foudras's insect.

11. *Psylliodes weberi* Lohse (1955:88-9).—New to the British fauna, hitherto confused with the rather common *P. napi* F. and to be found mixed with it in many collections. The differences, though not great, are sufficiently marked and stable to make it a matter of some surprise that (being far from rare) it has not been detected much earlier. The two species can easily be separated as follows:—

<i>napi</i>	<i>weberi</i>
Smaller on average (2-3.3 mm.), more fusiform, more pointed behind.	Larger on average (3.2-3.7 mm.), more elliptic-ovate, less pointed behind.
Usually with slight greenish tinge.	Pure dark blue, hardly varying.
The first 3-5 antennal segments clear testaceous, the rest pitchy with base often lighter, but sometimes largely rufous.	Antennal segments 1-2 usually slightly infusate, 3-4 piceous to blackish, the rest deep black.
Hind tibia clear rufous even at extreme base.	Extreme base of hind tibia a little darkened even if only narrowly and vaguely.
Callosity at front angle of thorax with a posterior tooth or projecting angle, behind which the side-margin is distinctly to slightly sinuate.	Callosity at front angle of thorax at most only obtusely angled behind, with little interruption to the smooth curvature of side-margin.
♂: front and middle basitarsus obviously dilated.	♂: front and middle basitarsus not noticeably dilated (about as in ♀).
On various Cruciferae.	On <i>Nasturtium officinale</i> R. Br. (watercress).

There are perhaps minor differences in the aedeagus of the two species, but this is not yet quite clear and in any case

is of little importance for determination. Should doubt arise in a given instance over any of the points just tabulated, it will soon be dispelled if the others are considered jointly. The small colour differences relating to the base of antennae and hind tibiae might seem very trivial, but in fact appear remarkably constant—holding good, at least to a large extent, even for decidedly teneral individuals of *weberi*. It is needless to compare the new species with any other on our list except perhaps *chrysocephala* L. (typical form); but that is obviously larger and longer-limbed with the forehead yellowish or reddish, and the male characters differ.

From what I have seen, *P. weberi* may well prove at least as widespread in the British Isles as *P. napi*; and there are indications that it is often more common when it occurs than the latter, which tends to be found sparingly and, in my experience, singly as a rule. However, being limited by its foodplant to watercress beds and suchlike places, *weberi* must obviously be the more local of the two in most areas, while *napi* is not thus restricted but occurs in various situations. I can record *weberi*, so far, from Kent (several places), Surrey, Hants., Devon (several places), Cornwall, Oxon, and Flint; the first British specimens I happened to detect were from Nannerch in the latter county, taken by Sir E. Ansorge, after which I found it in my own and other collections. Most of those in the Power and Champion collections, etc., go back to the last century, so it is not a recent arrival in our fauna. Whether it occurs in Scotland and Ireland is not yet known, but clearly anyone interested in doing so could greatly extend the very short list of mostly southern counties given above. Abroad, I know of it only from North Germany—Holstein, Hamburg, N. Hannover, Mecklenburg; in the first of these districts much commoner than *P. napi* (Lohse, *l.c.*: 89). Its range in Europe will no doubt be very much extended as it becomes more widely recognised.⁵

12. *Doubtfully British species not treated above.*—Of these, one only (*Hypocassida subferruginea* Schk.) is still retained in the 1945 List. The remaining half-dozen or more pose the problems with which one is always faced in such cases, and for which no really satisfactory solution presents itself. I do not, therefore, propose to discuss the individual species, beyond a few passing remarks on one or two, nor even to list them. The evidence is about equally scanty for most; there appear to be no records of any for the past 100 years, and usually much longer. The hypothesis of chance introduction with plants, etc., could in theory apply to almost any of them—though unlikely to be true for all. Natural extinction may well account for the lack of any but ancient records of *Crioceris 12-punctata* L. (cf. Fowler, p. 284) and the *Hypocassida* (*id.*,

⁵ The detection of this species in N. Germany and subsequently in England is curiously paralleled by that of another novelty, *Anobium inexpectatum* Lohse (see Allen, *Ent. mon. Mag.*, *in press*)—likewise due to the critical acumen of my friend and colleague, Dr. Lohse.

p. 400); and if the latter is to remain in our list, the former has as good a title to inclusion also. The same might be said of *Hispella atra* L., since an overlooked record can be added to Stephens's from Rochford, Essex: Walker (1932: 107) mentions "one fine example, with printed label 'Bristol'" in the Dale collection at Oxford. This extraordinary little beetle, being a grass-feeder on sandy wastes, is less likely to have been introduced than some of the others; even Fowler, though insisting that it must have been recorded in error (pp. 394, 395)—without justification, of course—nevertheless admitted that it "may possibly be confirmed as indigenous". Similarly, in the case of *Cryptocephalus violaceus* Laich., Fowler's data (p. 296) can be augmented by the existence in the Power collection of a fine specimen marked as taken at Folkestone by Sidebotham (vi.1864), along with Power's old Cambridge example mentioned by Fowler. These last two species would seem, therefore, at least to have a better claim to inclusion in our list—albeit in the doubtful category—than some of the others of their class, particularly those resting on the sole authority of Stephens and unrepresented in old collections.)

Summary

The specific validity of *Lema septentrionis* Weise is emphasised in opposition to current usage; a case is made for the restoration of *Clytra laeviuscula* Ratz. as a British species; the status of *Phaedon regnianus* Tott. is briefly discussed; the downgrading of *P. concinnus* Steph. and *Phyllotreta cruciferae* Goeze to varieties of other species is shown to be unjustified; *Phyllotreta hintoni* Donis., *Aphthona aeneomicans* Allard, and *Psylliodes instabilis* Foud. (it is suggested) should be erased from the list; *Aphthona melancholica* Weise requires to be substituted for *A. venustula* Kutsch. in our list; *Psylliodes weberi* Lohse is brought forward as an addition, and *Chaetocnema aridula* Gyll. as a virtual addition or reinstatement.

References

- Anon. 1864. Entomological Society of London, June 6th, 1864. *Ent. mon. Mag.*, 1: 51.
- Champion, G. C. 1897. The *Lema erichsoni*, Suffr., of British collections: synonymical note. *Ibid.*, 33: 135-6.
- Donisthorpe, H. St. J. K. 1927a. *British Ants* (ed. 2). London.
- Donisthorpe, H. St. J. K. 1927b. *The Guests of British Ants*. London.
- Donisthorpe, H. St. J. K. 1939. *A Preliminary List of the Coleoptera of Windsor Forest*. London.
- Donisthorpe, H. St. J. K. 1944a. *Phyllotreta hintoni* sp.n. (Col., Halticidae), a species of Coleoptera new to Britain. *Ent. mon. Mag.*, 80: 227.
- Donisthorpe, H. St. J. K. 1944b. *Aphthona aeneomicans* Allard (Col., Halticidae), a species of Coleoptera new to Britain. *Ibid.*, 259.
- Fowler, W. W. 1890. *The Coleoptera of the British Islands*, 4. London.
- Fowler, W. W., and Donisthorpe, H. St. J. K. 1913. *Ibid.*, 6.
- Hansen, V. 1927. Biller, VII. *Damm. Fauna*, 31: 190, fig. 63.
- Heikertinger, F. 1944. Bestimmungstabelle der paläarktischen *Aphthona*-Arten. *Kol. Rundsch.*, 30 (4): 37-122 (68, 84-5, 120, figs. 22, 31).
- Hincks, W. D. 1950. *Aphthona euphorbiae* (Schrank) (Col., Chrysomelidae) in Yorkshire. *Ent. mon. Mag.*, 86: 224.

- Johnson, W. F., and Halbert, J. N. 1902. *A List of the Beetles of Ireland*: 760. Dublin.
- Kloet, G. S., and Hincks, W. D. 1945 *A Check List of British Insects*. Stockport.
- Lohse, G. A. 1954. Neuheiten der deutschen Käferfauna. *Deutscher Entomologentag in Hamburg, 1953*. Jena.
- Lohse, G. A. 1955. Neuheiten der deutschen Käferfauna. *Ent. Blätt.*, **51**: 88-9.
- Mohr, K. H. 1966. In Freude, Harde, & Lohse, *Die Käfer Mitteleuropas*, 9. Krefeld.
- Murray, A. 1853. *Catalogue of the Coleoptera of Scotland*: 93. Edinburgh and London.
- Reitter, E. 1912. *Fauna Germanica*, 4. Stuttgart.
- Sharp, D. 1910. On the British species of *Phaedon*. *Ent. mon. Mag.*, **46**: 4-6.
- Tottenham, C. E. 1941. Two Coleoptera new to science in Britain. *Ibid.*, **77**: 14.
- Walker, J. J. 1932. The Dale Collection of British Coleoptera. *Ibid.*, **68** (passim): 107.

CATOCALA FRAXINI (L.) IN ABERDEENSHIRE. — A specimen of this splendid moth was captured on a shop window at Ellon, Aberdeenshire, on 2nd September, 1976, and was brought to me for identification. This species seems to have been seen twice previously in Aberdeenshire, at Cutler and at Dorncleugh (Esson, L. G., 1890, *Entomologist*, **23**: 170; Reid, 1893, *A List of the Lepidoptera of Aberdeenshire and Kincardineshire*) but this is the first modern record. Neither have there been many other Scottish records, although one was found quite recently in Shetland.

The provenance of the specimen must remain in doubt but since we have recently had a minor invasion of easterly migrants here, such as *Eurois occulta* (Linn.), it seems possible that it came from the same direction and its distribution in central Europe and Scandinavia makes this possible. — M. R. YOUNG, Department of Zoology, University of Aberdeen.

AN EXTENSION OF THE KNOWN RANGE OF COLIAS AURORINA HELDREICHI STAUDINGER. — I should like to report the existence of *Colias aurorina heldreichi* Staudinger on Mt. Smolikas in the Pindos mountains of northern Greece. The insect is to be found rarely in late June and early July at altitudes of about 1,200m. *C.a. heldreichi* was previously known only from Mt. Tymphristos, Mt. Parnassos and Mt. Chelmos, all of which lie at least 100 miles to the South of Mt. Smolikas. The discovery of *C.a. heldreichi* in the Pindos range might prove to be a zoogeographically significant extension of the known range of this species. — J. BROWN, 12 Browning Avenue, Sutton, Surrey.

EUPITHECIA PHOENICIATA RAMBUR IN THE NEW FOREST. — As identifier for a trap which has this year been started by the Rothamsted Insect Survey at Gritnam, near Lyndhurst, I was pleased to find in the catch for 18th-19th August, 1976, a specimen of *E. phoeniceata* in good condition. It would appear that this is the first of this species to be taken in the New Forest. — L. W. SIGGS, Sungate, Football Green, Minstead, Lyndhurst, Hants.